EVERY ONE OF US CAN KNOW WE'RE IN A HEALTHY, INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WHEN WE HAVE CREATED AN ENVIORNMENT WHERE:

1. I CAN BE ME.
2. YOU CAN BE YOU.
3. WE CAN BE US.
4. I CAN GROW.
5. YOU CAN GROW.
6. WE CAN GROW TOGETHER.

ESSENTIALLY, THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT. IT'S PARADOXICAL THAT A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP FREES ME TO BE MYSELF, AND YET, I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM BECAUSE ACQUIRING SELF KNOWLEDGE IS A LIFELONG PROCESS. ALTHOUGH YOU MAY NOT HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WHO YOU ARE, YOU RECOGNIZE CLEARLY WHEN YOU ARE NOT BEING ALLOWED THE FREEDOM TO BE YOU.

Most of us are not willing to get beyond our defense mechanism of denial. Check yourself on these questions regarding human relationships. Using the techniques of group process, discuss at length answers to the questions. The "Why?" at the end asks you to explain your answers in terms of your "basic vision" or belief system. Remember, your answers should come from your own experiential belief system.

1. Principle: Be yourself. Don't wear a mask or play a role.

   Question: In what circumstances do you find it most difficult to be honest and open about what you think and feel? Why?

2. Principle: Experience fully and express freely your true emotions.

   Question: With which emotions are you most uncomfortable? Why?

3. Principle: Do not let fear of hurting another's feelings make your decisions or prevent you from doing or saying what you think you should.

   Question: Are there certain persons or types of persons or certain situations in which this fear of hurting another's feelings is crippling and painful to you? Why?

4. Principle: Assert yourself. You have a right to be respected, to think your own thoughts and make your own choices. You should be listened to and taken seriously. Insist on this right.

   Question: When and with whom do you find it hardest to be assertive? To demand respect from your person and your rights? why?

5. Principle: Do not bend yourself out of shape trying to please everyone all the time.

   Question: Do you feel compelled to please all people or at least certain persons all the time? In certain circumstances? Why?

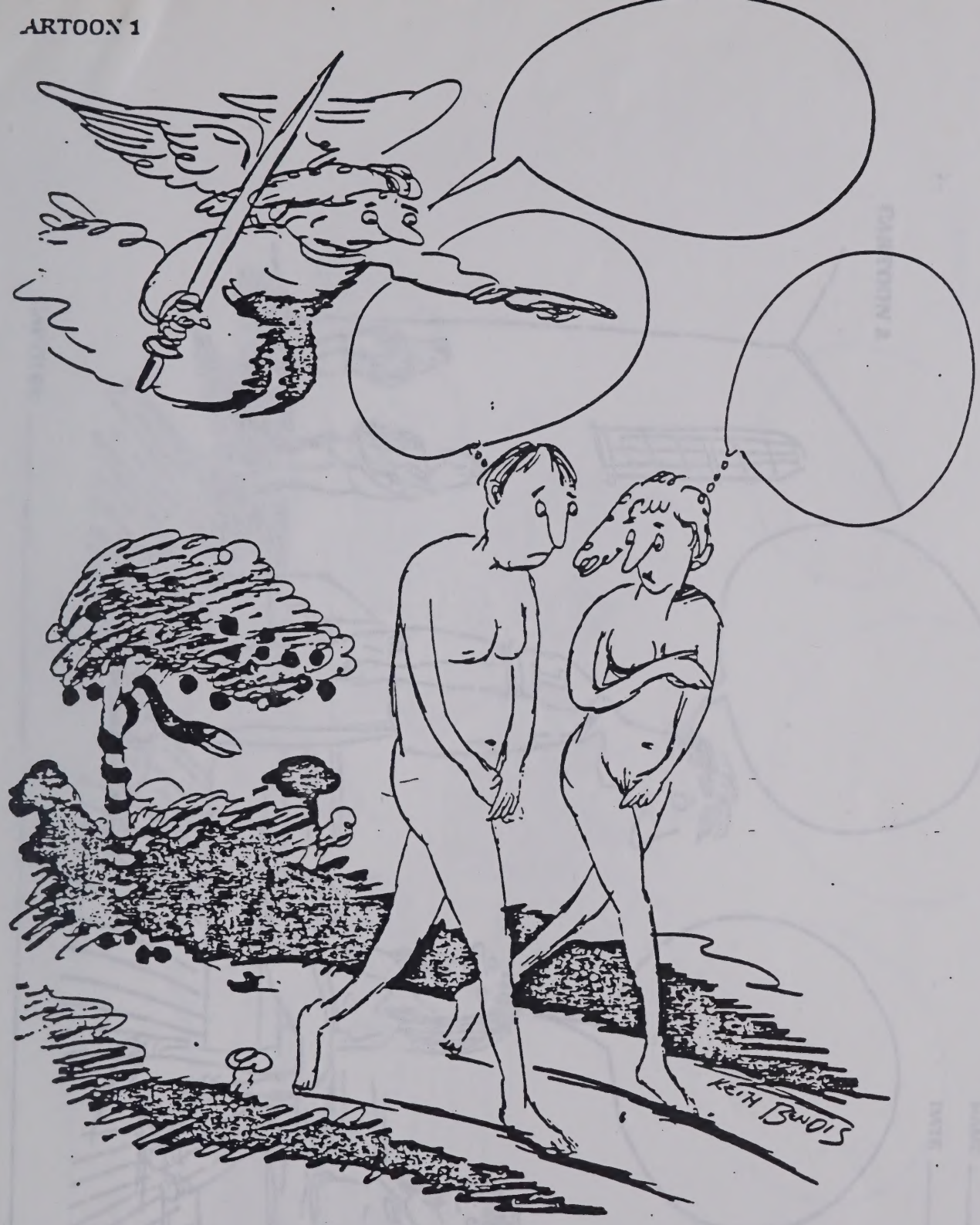
6. Principle: Do not attempt to make yourself look better by attacking, cutting down, or gossiping about others.

   Question: Do you feel threatened by the success of others? Of those with whom you work? Of the same or opposite sex? Do you feel compelled to point out their limitations? Why?

7. Principle: Look for what is good in others; enjoy and praise others for their good qualities and deeds.

   Question: Do you tend to be more aware of others' irritating and obnoxious qualities or their good and pleasing qualities? Is it true of any particular individual or group, that you tend to fix upon their limitations, failures? Why?

ARTOON 1



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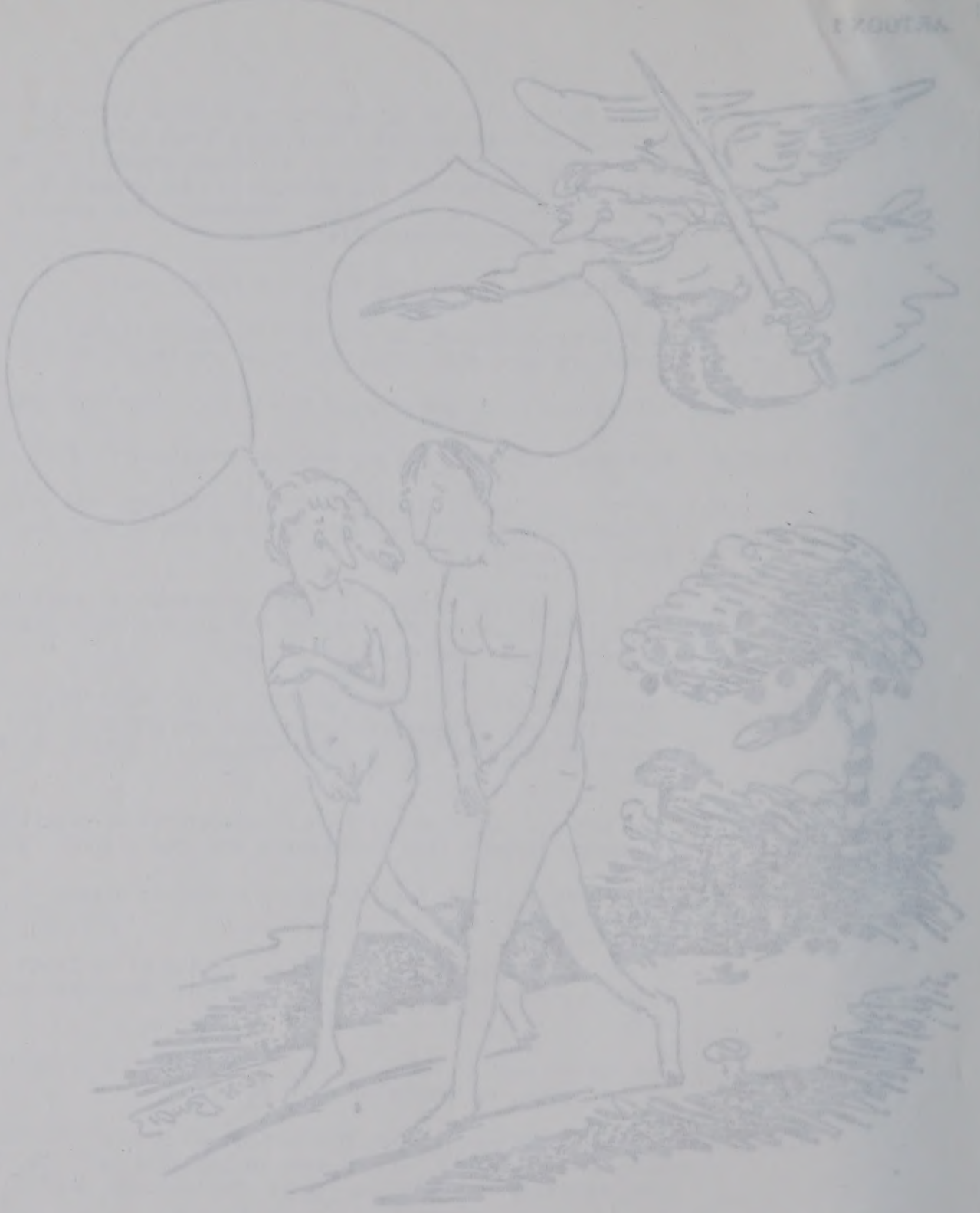

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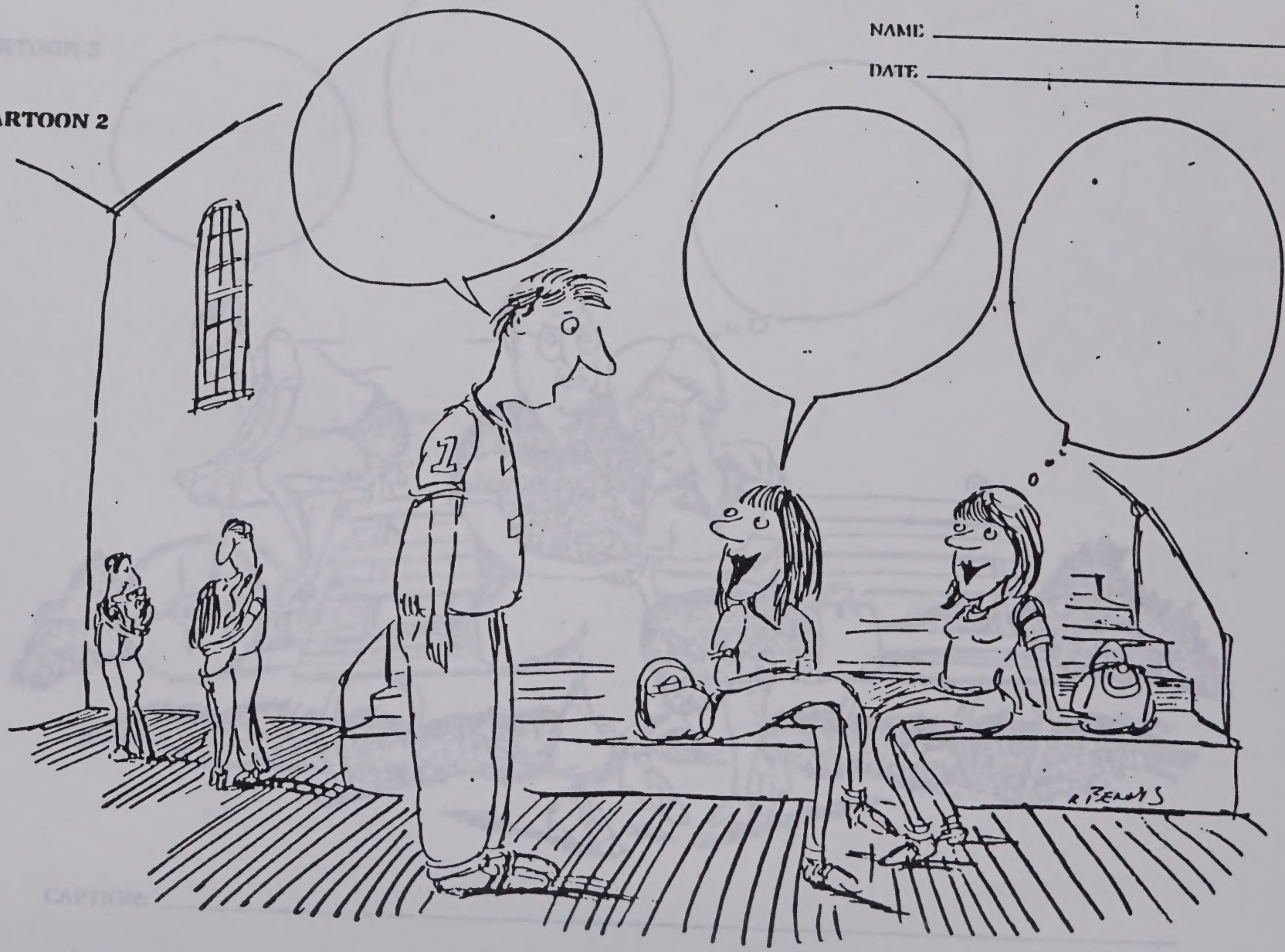

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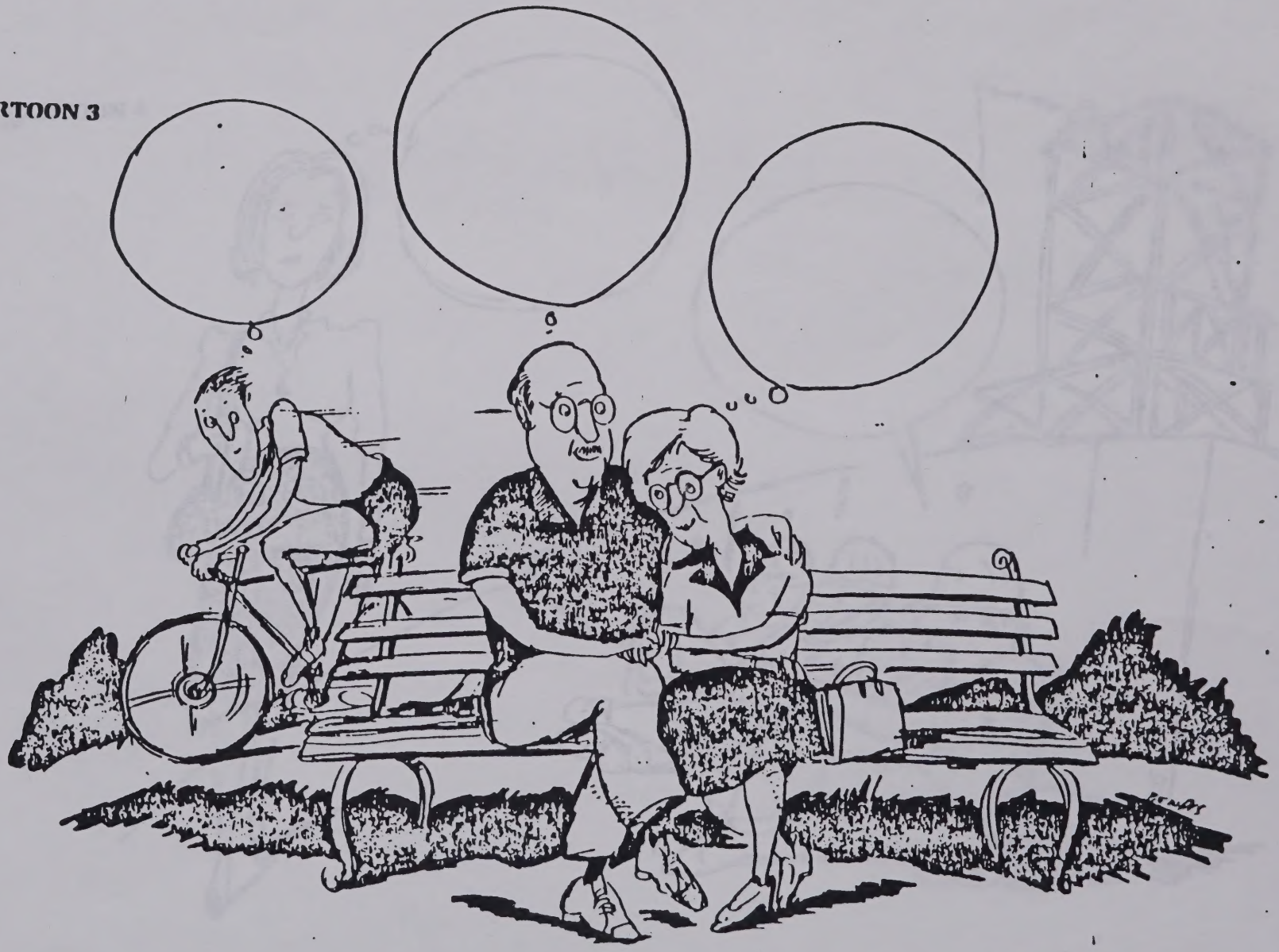
CHILDREN'S WISDOM
JAMIE
JULIE

CARTOON 3



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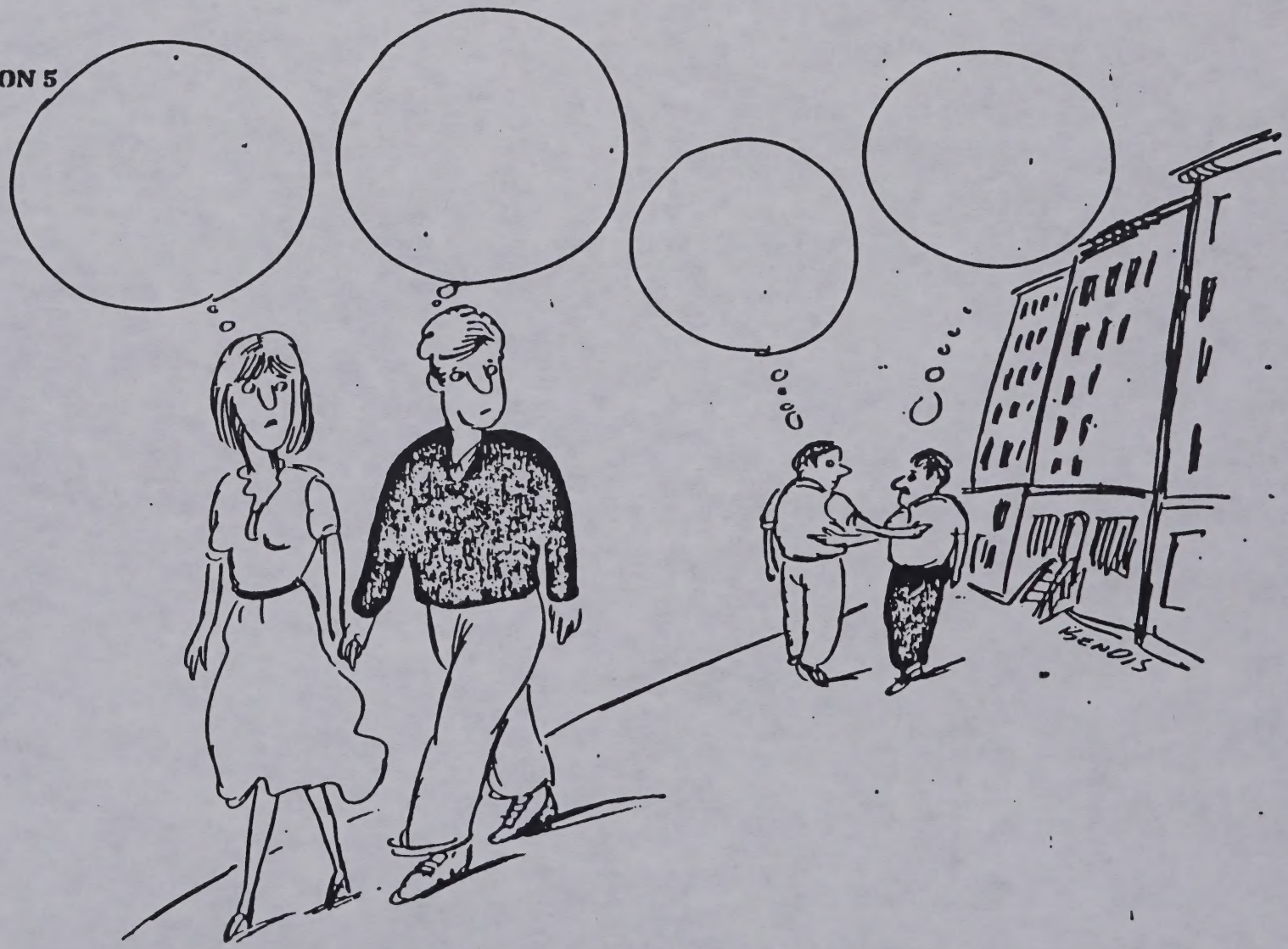

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BASIC PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

1) **Whose problem is it?**

   (Mine? His? Hers? Their's? It's?)

2) **Whatcha gonna do about it?**

   (Something? Nothing? Anything?)
   (What are the options? What are the consequences?)

3) **Does she/he have a name?**

   (Janie Sue personalizes - "the bitch" does not.)

4) **Where is the care and concern?**

   (Let's look at her life...do we care?)
   (Is she relating?...I'm a victim - she's bad!)

5) **Is that just an attitude?**

   (Do you really feel that way? Is that your belef system talking? Are you having a rotten day? Are you feeling picked on?...PMS?... Headache?...)

6) **Clear it. (....we care...) or don't run it here!**

7) **How does that make you feel?**

"...Social advance depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as upon the result itself." ...Jane Adams

1. What kinds of relationships are we seeking? How does this relate to dating, anonymous sex, quick booty calls, monogamy, open relationships? Is it OK to have multiple partners or is it about what you do with who you're with? Is monogamy difficult for you? Are there other choices and how do we make them?

John Topping Bareback

2. Many men are choosing to have unprotected sex - not from lack of self-esteem, but for other reasons - increased intimacy, dislike of condoms, both partners test negative. What are some other reasons? What does this mean in terms of personal freedom, responsibility, sexual fulfillment? Is it safe for men who have unprotected sex to talk about it with other brothers?

Craig Why Go There?

3. There is a myriad of services for HIV+ gay men. What about HIV- men? In what ways are they affected? Do uninfected men have special needs for support, dialogue? Are these needs being met? As more and more black gay men are becoming infected should we concentrate services for them only? Should we increase services for HIV- men?

4. A vast number of organizations have cropped up to address HIV in the community. But, as one author put it, "You can't build a community around a disease." What about other relevant issues - black- gay, bisexual, transgendered, questioning- youth; gay parents/adoption; black gay cultural activities? Are they being addressed? If not, then how can we start?

5. The epidemic has prompted many of us to come out of the closet re: sexual orientation and HIV status. Some of us have experience affirming breakthroughs with our families while others have been shunned? How have our families, those who've raised us responded to us as black gay men - negative and positive in the context of AIDS?

Carlos Scarlett Letter

6. Many of us have lost at least one friend or lover to AIDS. How does this affect us? Where do we go to heal from the pain of such loss? Often when one of us dies, the cause of death is closeted and/or the dearly departed is "heterosexualized"? How do we celebrate/honor the lives of our dear ones with honesty? Do we ignore our need to grieve, to reach out for help? Can we talk about it with our friends?

THEORY DISCUSSION

Facilitator: CRAIG

This is one of the most important parts of the day: a discussion on education theories in general, and our department in particular. You are to facilitate this discussion and allow for all sorts of viewpoints. You are, of course, allowed to inject your own views in your facilitation.

You have only ONE HOUR for this exercise.

I will prepare some thoughtful questions to include in this exercise but I think you will have plenty of things to throw out there.

Keep things moving in regards to time, and have fun!

SUGGESTED CONVERSATIONS:

1) It seems that asking people to change behavior is not only an attempt to change people, but a battle to change human nature itself. The basis of much of our work suggests that people make a direct connection between lovemaking and death. Can this ever be effectively done?

2) There are seemingly contradictory schools of thought in terms of AIDS education right now. One, that gay men, for instance, STOP being so promiscuis, and two, that we need to embrace sexuality of all kinds and work within those perameters. Which is better?

3) In 1997, AIDS educators aren't the socially progressive people we were perceived as in the 1980's. We're the sex police, geeks, conservative people. How do we combat that perception?

4) IN what ways could AID Atlanta make HIV prevention messages vital again?

5) The anticipated wave of infections in the heterosexual population never really hit as hardas it was feared it would. How does this affect our messages, our focus, our priorities? Was AIDS over-sold to low-rosk groups? Does this have any affect on our work at all?

Craig:

CRAIG!